

Message Text

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ORIGIN SP-02

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 160029

FOR S/P DIRECTOR LAKE, DELIVER AT OOB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CG

SUBJECT: ZAIRE UPDATE

1. AF HAS PREPARED THE FOLLOWING MEMORANDUM FOR NEWSOM'S MEETING WITH THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR TOMORROW. AFTER THE TEXT OF THE MEMORANDUM IS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION THAT MIGHT BE HELPFUL ON THE CURRENT SITUATION IN ZAIRE.

2. BEGIN TEXT OF MEMORANDUM:

SUMMARY: IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR, WILLY VAN CAUWENBERG, WANTS A TOUR D'HORIZON OF U.S. AFRICA POLICY IN THE LIGHT OF THE SECRETARY'S RECENT TESTIMONY AND SPEECH. WE BELIEVE THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OCCASION TO OUTLINE OUR POLICY VIS-A-VIS ZAIRE, EMPHASIZING OUR DISSATIS-
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FACTION WITH MOBUTU'S REACTION TO THE FIVE-POWER DEMARCHE. YOU SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE THAT THE BELGIANS MAY SHORTLY ASK US FOR AIRLIFT SUPPORT BOTH TO REMOVE THE TROOPS FROM SHABA AND TO FERRY PART OF THEIR OWN EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO KINSHASA.

3. BACKGROUND: MOBUTU'S REACTION TO THE FIVE-POWER DEMARCHE HAS THUS FAR BEEN UNSATISFACTORY. WHILE HE SEEMS TO HAVE REITERATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO UNDERTAKE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY REFORMS, HE

ASKED FOR THREE MONTHS BREATHING SPACE. HE SEEMINGLY DREW THE LINE AT POLITICAL REFORMS, ASSERTING THAT THERE IS NO "LUNDA PROBLEM" AND HE HAS SHOWN NO INDICATION THAT HE WILL DISASSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM THE MOST CORRUPT ELEMENTS, SUCH AS UNCLE LITHO.

4. A SEPARATE CABLE HAS BEEN FORWARDED FOR YOUR APPROVAL WHICH ASKS AMBASSADOR CUTLER TO GIVE US HIS BEST JUDGMENT AS TO WHETHER WE CAN BE CONFIDENT THAT MOBUTU WILL PROCEED WITH THE RANGE OF REFORMS THAT HAVE BEEN RECOMMENDED. THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT IF THE JUDGMENT IS NEGATIVE, OR IF UPON REVIEW WE DECIDE BACK HERE THAT MOBUTU IS NOT SERIOUS ABOUT REFORM--WE WILL NOT GO FORWARD WITH OUR CURRENT FY'78 ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, PL-480 AND OUR SSA LOAN--LET ALONE ENVISAGE ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE.

5. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS ALSO EVIDENT THAT THE BELGIANS AND THE FRENCH HAVE NOT PRESSED AS HARD AS WE HAVE FOR REFORMS. THAT WAS TO BE EXPECTED, BUT WE NONETHELESS HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING WITH OUR ALLIES, WORKED OUT IN BRUSSELS AND PARIS, THAT WE WOULD PRESENT A UNITED AND FIRM FRONT TO
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MOBUTU. WE SHOULD REMIND THEM OF THIS AND OF OUR DETERMINATION TO LINK ASSISTANCE TO REFORM.

6. LASTLY, WE HAVE REPORTS FROM THE BELGIAN EMBASSY AND FROM KINSHASA THAT BRUSSELS WILL BE ASKING US FOR AIRLIFT SUPPORT BOTH TO REMOVE THEIR TROOPS FROM SHABA AND TO FERRY PART OF THEIR OWN EMERGENCY SUPPLIES TO KINSHASA. WE CAN ADDRESS THIS ISSUE WHEN IT IS FORMALLY PUT TO US, BUT WE CAN ALSO LET THE BELGIANS KNOW NOW THAT THE FOOD AIRLIFT AT LEAST WILL BE A DIFFICULT DECISION FOR US IN THE LIGHT OF OUR OWN POSITION VIS-A-VIS MOBUTU.

7. TALKING POINTS: FIVE-POWER DEMARCH AND MOBUTU'S REACTION

-- AT BRUSSELS THE US DELEGATION TOOK THE POSITION THAT EVEN INTERIM ASSISTANCE OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS HAD TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY AT LEAST EVIDENCE

THAT ZAIRE WOULD USE ITS OWN FOREIGN EXCHANGE RESOURCES IN A RATIONAL WAY TO ADDRESS ESSENTIAL IMPORT REQUIREMENTS.

-- IN THIS CONNECTION THE US DELEGATION ASKED FOR ZAIRE'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE BUDGET COVERING THE NEXT THREE MONTHS. WE HAVE NOT YET RECEIVED THE BUDGET.

-- MORE IMPORTANTLY, MOBUTU'S REACTION TO THE FIVE-POWER DEMARCHE SEEMS TO US TO SAY THAT HE HAS NO INTENTION OF GOING BEYOND ECONOMIC REFORMS AND PERHAPS MILITARY REFORMS. HE SEEMS TO HAVE REFUSED, FOR EXAMPLE, THE IDEA OF RECONCILIATION WITH THE LUNDA, AND HAS REACTED NEGATIVELY TO THE SUGGESTION THAT HE DISASSOCIATE HIMSELF FROM THE MOST CORRUPT ELEMENTS.

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-- IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW WE CAN PROCEED WITH OUR CURRENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

8. BELGIAN POSITION ON REFORM:

-- THE FIVE-POWERS AGREED IN PARIS THAT WE WOULD PRESENT A UNITED FRONT TO MOBUTU ON THE NEED FOR URGENT REFORMS.

-- AT THE BRUSSELS MEETING THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN THE AMERICAN AND BELGIAN DELEGATIONS, WITH THE LATTER MAINTAINING THAT ASSISTANCE OVER THE NEXT THREE MONTHS SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO REFORM.

-- THIS DIFFERENCE OF APPROACH SEEMS TO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO MOBUTU'S LESS THAN SATISFACTORY REACTION TO THE FIVE-POWER REFORM MESSAGE.

-- WE CAN UNDERSTAND BELGIAN'S DELICATE POSITION IN THIS MATTER, BUT WE ALSO WISH TO EMPHASIZE OUR DETERMINATION TO LINK US ASSISTANCE TO REFORM. WE THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN AGREEMENT TO THIS COURSE IN PARIS.

-- IT SEEMS TO US THAT IF BRUSSELS' WILLINGNESS TO MOVE QUICKLY ON INTERIM ASSISTANCE WERE ASSOCIATED WITH A REITERATION OF THE NEED FOR THE URGENT REFORMS SET OUT IN PARIS AND BRUSSELS--IT MIGHT HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON MOBUTU.

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9. POTOENTIAL BELGIAN REQUESTS FOR AIRLIFT:

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-- MY STAFF INFORMS ME THAT YOUR GOVERNMENT MAY SHORTLY REQUEST, IN A FORMAL MANNER, AIRLIFT SUPPORT BOTH TO REMOVE YOUR TROOPS AND TO FERRY PART OF YOUR FOOD SUPPLIES TO KINSHASA.

-- IF SUCH A REQUEST IS RECEIVED, WE WILL GIVE IT PROMPT CONSIDERATION, BUT I MIGHT POINT OUT IT WILL BE A DIFFICULT DECISION--ESPECIALLY THE QUESTION OF FERRYING PART OF YOUR FOOD SUPPLIES, SINCE AT THE SAME TIME WE ARE TAKING A TOUGH LINE WITH MOBUTU ON SHORT TERM ASSISTANCE.

END TEXT OF MEMORANDUM.

10. DEMARCHES ON REFORMS WERE MADE JUNE 19 AND 20, WITH THE FIVE AMBASSADORS EACH HAVING SEPARATE APPOINTMENTS WITH MOBUTU. (BELGIUM WOULD HAVE PREFERRED A JOINT DEMARCHE). IT HAS NOT BEEN REPORTED YET WHETHER THE FRG AMBASSADOR HAS MET WITH MOBUTU, WHO WAS ANGRY AT GERMAN RADIO BROADCAST. AMBASSADOR CUTLER REPORTS OTHERS WERE LESS TOUGH THAN HE.

11. POINTS WHICH WERE EMPHASIZED WITH MOBUTU IN THESE DEMARCHES INCLUDE:

-- IMPROVED RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA.

-- RECONCILIATION WITH SHABA. (U.S. INCLUDED SPECIFICS ON REPRISALS, RETURN OF EXILES, DIALOGUE WITH SHABAN POLITICAL LEADERS. U.S. AND BELGIUM STRESSED REPORTS OF ZAIRIAN ARMY'S MALTREATMENT OF LOCAL SHABA POPULATION.)

-- FOREIGN EXPERTS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE IN FINANCE
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MINISTRY AND CENTRAL BANK.

-- FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROLS.

-- DECENTRALIZATION WITH MORE RESPONSIBILITY IN MINISTRIES.

12. IN READING PRESIDENT CARTER'S LETTER, MOBUTU BRISTLED AT REFERENCES TO CORRUPTION, ARRESTS AND

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EXECUTIONS. IN RESPONSE TO HIS REQUEST FOR SPECIFICS ON FORMER, CUTLER CITED FAILURE OF OFFICIALS TO REPATRIATE EARNINGS FROM COFFEE EXPORTS, ILLEGAL PROFITEERING IN ESSENTIAL IMPORTS, CORRUPTION IN PL-480 DISTRIBUTION AND WIDESPREAD STEALING FROM CIVILIANS BY ARMY.

13. MOBUTU RESPONDED TO AMBASSADORS, THEN IN A SPEECH JUNE 21 AS CHARACTERIZED IN ABOVE MEMO.

HIS SPEECH REFLECTED EXTREME SENSITIVITY TO CRITICISM
IN WESTERN PRESS. EVEN WHERE HE RECOGNIZED NEED
FOR REFORM (ECONOMIC, MILITARY), THE BULK OF
WHAT HE SAID WAS A DEFENSE OF HIS REGIME. HE
RECOGNIZED NO NEED FOR POLITICAL REFORM OR RECON-
CILIATION.

14. OBLIGATION OF PLANNED U.S. BALANCE OF PAYMENTS
ASSISTANCE (\$18 MILLION PL-480, \$8.3 MILLIO
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